(b) if so, the details of the projects being planned in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(b) In view of (a) above, the question does not arise.

Steps to reduce medicine prices

1831. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are proposing to fix the prices of the essential drugs so that common man can be benefited;

(b) if so, what are the steps taken in this regard and how the producers of the drugs especially the foreign companies are co-operating; and

(c) whether any proposal to amend the existing law contemplated to achieve the aim and goal set by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The Supreme Court *vide* its interim order dated 10.03.2003 in SLP(c) no. 3668/2003 directed the Government, *inter-alia*, to "consider and formulate appropriate criteria for ensuring essential and life saving drugs not to fall out of price control.....". As per the directions of the Supreme Court the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reviewed the National Essential Drugs List 1996 and brought out the National List of Essential Medicines 2003 (NLEM 2003).

Keeping in view the directions of the Supreme Court it has been proposed in the draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 that basket of drugs for price control would be the essential medicine as contained in the NLEM 2003 in addition to the 74 drugs which are at present under price control under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. After the finalisation of the Policy a new DPCO would be issued for controlling prices of identified essential medicines.

Besides, it has also been proposed in the new draft National Pharmaceutical Policy, 2006 that a separate Drugs (Price Regulation and Control) Act may be introduced to strengthen NPPA for effective monitoring and enforcement of Drug Prices.